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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Written statement* submitted by North-SouthXXI, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 December 1999]

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* This written statement is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization.

GE.00-10968 (E)

Violation of human rights in Equatorial Guinea

1. Since 1974, when the victims of the repressive regime in Equatorial Guinea appeared for the first time before the Commission on Human Rights to condemn the offences being committed against the people of that country, several associations and bodies have strongly condemned, year after year, the constant deterioration in the situation with regard to all rights in that central African country, whether the civil and political rights so dear to the West or the economic, social and cultural rights essential to the survival of the peoples of the South.

2. The 1979 coup d'état, which overthrew dictator Macias Nguema and placed his nephew Obiang Nguema in power, and the promise of democratization held out to Africa in the 1990s seemed capable of influencing the totalitarian regime in place in the former Spanish colony, which became independent in 1968.

3. Quite the opposite was true. Now that the country's immense oil resources have begun to be developed, a re-emergence of State violence and an increase in repressive police practices are being observed, completely out of proportion to the situation in neighbouring countries such as Gabon.

4. Opponents of the regime, including former associates of the regime in power, are relentlessly pursued and physically eliminated. In 1997 the Malabo authorities, with the complicity of the Gabonese presidential guard and in disregard of all the rules of humanitarian law, organized the abduction of three former ministers who had taken refuge in Libreville, including Julio Ela Mangue, former Minister of the Interior, and Guillermo Nguema Obama, former Minister of Finance. In 1998, the former Minister of the Economy, Felipe Hinextrosa Ikaka, who was instrumental in setting up the Equatorial Guinea offices of the International Bank for West Africa (BIAO) and in the Bank's conversion, died under circumstances which have not been elucidated.

5. Other leading officials of the Equatorial Guinea administration met the same fate in 1999, in particular Antonio Nculu Oyé, former Director General of the Ministry of Culture, who had become President of the National Commission responsible for supervising elections. The most flagrant case concerned the murder of a former diplomat, the first ambassadeur of Equatorial Guinea in Paris, Mr. Julian, by a well-known member of the President's inner circle, nicknamed "Effe Poulet". In Burkina Faso the murder of a journalist destabilizes the Government, but in Equatorial Guinea repeated crimes against senior officials do not cause a stir. That is how strong the Government is, and how pitiless the repression.

6. In Parliament, the PDGE (Parti Démocratique de la Guinée Equatoriale), the party in power, occupies 71 of the 75 seats in the National Assembly. Even in the legal sphere, the Government permits no form of protest. The opposition parties are systematically hounded and their members arrested and stripped of their jobs. Dr. Wenceslao Alogo Mansogo, a surgeon who had recently completed his training in French universities, was dismissed from the public health sector. He is a member of Convergence pour la Démocratie Sociale (CPDS), a party which opposes Equatorial Guinea's repressive regime.

7. The country's wealth, especially its lucrative oil resources, are distributed among the members of the President's family and the French and American oil companies which divide up Equatorial Guinea's oilfields.

8. The upsurge of extreme poverty in the country has driven thousands of teenagers to emigrate to Spain, where they practise various forms of prostitution under humiliating conditions in order to help their relatives back home.

9. The ambiguous actions of the Western Governments to which Equatorial Guinea is linked through its oil, or its history, as in the case of Spain, merely strengthen the totalitarian practices of the Malabo regime and reinforce the authorities' feeling that they may take any action with impunity. For at stake are some lucrative contracts for cooperation and the establishment of joint enterprises, such as the recently signed cooperation agreements of November 1999 between the Equatorial Guinea Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Assistant Director-General of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

10. In view of the fact that the rights of an entire people are being violated, the Commission on Human Rights should take the necessary urgent measures to ensure that minimum standards of law, if only humanitarian law, may prevail in this part of the world, where the existence of NGOs is not even contemplated.